

SUPPLEMENT TO THE STATEMENT BY

SAMUEL A ADAMS

NOTE:

I would like to attach this supplement to my main statement. It has to do with Cambodia, and what I believe was the deliberate fabrication of statistics of the Khmer Communist Order of Battle by the CIA. I made allegations concerning the fabrication to the CIA Inspector General in December 1972, and I was told that Mr. Colby was aware of the allegations. As far as I can determine, no attempt was made to investigate the charges.

The circumstances of the fabrication are as follows:

1. The Khmer Communist Order of Battle, as put forth by U.S. intelligence between April 1970 and June 1971, was a range of from 5,000 to 10,000. The range remained constant during this period because no one within the US. Intelligence community was looking into the matter.

2. In June 1971, I completed a memorandum, about 40 pages long, which was based in a review of all available evidence. Shortly after I handed the paper in, it was killed; I was threatened with firing, and told to work on weekends for the foreseeable future. I did so -- that is I worked a seven-day week -- throughout

the summer of 1971. I would respectfully submit that this was a rare instance in which an intelligence analyst was punished during time of war for finding an enemy army.

3. Right after the paper was removed from my control, the job of researching the Communist OB in Cambodia was assigned to an analyst who had never worked on Cambodia, and who had never researched a combat OB. (By contrast, I had worked on Communist strength estimates for several years, often as the Agency's only analyst on the matter.) The day the new analyst was given the job, he was also given a range to come up with -- namely, 10,000-30,000. The analyst took five months to devise a way to come up with the assigned range. In November 1971, the CIA finally released its official OB. The number it came up with was a range of from 15,000-30,000, almost precisely the number the analyst had been given the previous June.

The present Khmer Communist (KC) Order of Battle approximately 50,000 -- is derivative of the old number. I respectfully submit that it is extremely ~~misleading~~ misleading, and greatly understates the strength of the Communist ^{military} organization in Cambodia. I would make the observation that U.S. intelligence currently asks us to believe that the Cambodian Government army of 200,000 outnumbered the KC army by ~~four~~ four to one. Since Phnom Penh seems about to fall, I would

respectfully suggest that the odds, as put forth by U.S. intelligence are something of an anomaly.

I would note that I am in the process of laying out a more detailed account of what happened, which will include names, dates, and who did what ~~xxx~~ to whom.

In any case, I submitted in December 1972 a detailed oral complaint to the CIA Inspector General (IG) on the matter. The IG official took lengthy notes on what I had to say. A day or so later, he told me that Mr. Colby, then the CIA's Executive Director, had said vis-a-vis my complaint, "Let the chips fall where they may."

As far as I can determine, only two things appeared to happen as a result of my complaints.

1. First, the Prosecution~~er~~, during my testimony for the Defense at the Ellsberg ^{trial} ~~case~~, brought the matter up to impeach my credibility as a witness. My trip to the CIA Inspector General was portrayed as the act of a chronic complainer.

2. Second, upon my return from the Ellsberg trial, I was informed orally that my employment at the CIA was about to be terminated. Although eventually the Agency backed down, I have reason to believe that the persons who proposed my termination were the same ones who were responsible for the fabrication of the Khmer Communist Order of Battle in 1971.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL A. ADAMS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

My name is Samuel A. Adams. I resigned from the Central Intelligence Agency on 1 June 1973. My resignation stemmed from dismay over what I thought was the sloppy and often dishonest way U.S. Intelligence conducted research on the struggle in Indochina. An example of the shortcomings, I believe, was the manner in which U.S. intelligence produced reports on the political and administrative agencies of the Viet-Cong. These agencies, sometimes called the "infrastructure," were the target of the Allied Phoenix program. The Phoenix program was overseen at one time by Mr. Colby, a candidate to receive the CIA's Directorship.

Seven of my ten years at the Agency were devoted to research on our adversaries in Indochina. My reports included an extensive study on the Viet-Cong police system, a treatise on Communist subversive agents in the South Vietnamese Army and police, and an examination of the Viet-Cong's covert structure in South Vietnamese territory. In 1970, I wrote a lengthy study entitled "Guide to a Viet-Cong Province," which the CIA uses as its standard field handbook on the Communists in South Vietnam. For about five years I gave the Agency's training course on the Viet-Cong to CIA case officers bound for Vietnam.

Preface

The Phoenix Program is an example of a sound concept gone awry. It was meant to destroy the Communists' political apparatus, but it has not done so, and the Viet-Cong are in the middle of a resurgence throughout South Vietnam. Although the country's surface looks peaceful enough (at least compared to the last few years) the appearance is deceiving. Beneath the surface of the South Vietnamese government, the unraveling is well along.

The Theory of Phoenix

Phoenix was conceived when the Allies' main weapons in South Vietnam were American warplanes, and heavily-armed battalions whose mission was to "search and destroy." The weapons were bludgeons, which all too often failed to discriminate between the enemy soldier and the innocent bystander. More important, they were virtually useless against the Viet-Cong political cadre, who, it came to be realized, was just as dangerous as the Viet-Cong warrior.

Phoenix was designed to fill the gap. Copied from a British concept which had succeeded in Malaya, the Phoenix Program was meant to replace the bludgeon with a scalpel. The key to the operation was precise targetting. Instead of bombs -- which killed large numbers of civilians in addition to the occasional political operative of the Viet-Cong -- Phoenix's main tools, theoretically, were good intelligence and good files. The object of the program was to find out who among the Vietnamese population were Viet-Cong cadres, and to arrest or kill them. In theory, arrests were preferable to assassinations, because a prisoner could lead to further arrests, and a cadaver led nowhere. In order to work, the Phoenix program had basic needs. These are five of the most important:

1. A clear perception of the nature and organization of the target.
2. Good intelligence concerning the names, the whereabouts, and the activities of the people who belong to it.
3. A tight, well-run police organization, with secure files, with the ability to keep close track of the population, and

-- more --

The initial problem was that the basic research on the nature of the adversary and of his organization was either undone or misunderstood. When the time came to designate a target for the Phoenix organization to aim at the most readily available entity was something US intelligence called the infrastructure, a catchall phrase long used to describe the non-military portion of the Viet Cong organization. Unfortunately, the Communists themselves had no such term, and U.S. intelligence had no precise definition of what it included. It did have a number, however, 39,175, which had remained the same from June 1965 up until the eve of the Tet offensive. Although the number changed after Tet--it has ranged since then from 60,000 to 90,000--the definitional problem was never cleared up. As a result, no one knows even now who belongs to the "infrastructure", and the number given out officially is the sum of the guesses from the field, made by people who have varying ideas of what they are counting. It is conceivable, using the loosely-defined official criteria, that we could say the "infrastructure" was anywhere from 10,000 to a quarter of a million strong.

A salient problem of who to count arose from the fact that for some time the Viet-Cong's covert operatives in South Vietnamese territory were not included in the official lists. Thus a spy in Thieu's office -- there was one -- would be excluded from the "infrastructure" because he failed to fit the official U.S. definition. The problem was compounded because of the reluctance on the part of U.S. intelligence to look into the matter of Viet Cong subversion. For example, in May 1969, the CIA Chief of Station for Saigon indicated on a visit to Washington his belief that the Viet Cong had only 300 agents in the South Vietnamese government. He spoke from ignorance. An in-depth research study going on at the same time suggested the real number of such agents was more like 30,000.

The question of the Communists' covert presence in South Vietnamese territory became particularly vexing after the coup in Cambodia in March, 1970. When it occurred, most of the Communists' army in the southern half of South Vietnam left for duty next door, and large numbers of Viet Cong cadres in Vietnam's Delta shifted from Viet Cong to South Vietnamese territory, often by false defection through Chieu Hoi Centers. The ensuing quiet in the Delta -- along with an apparent increase in the enemy's defection rates -- gave rise to optimism among American officials in Vietnam, including those who manned the Phoenix Program.

Precise Intelligence

Although hard intelligence on the names, whereabouts and doings of Communist cadres is much sought after, it is very hard to come by. Allied files bulge with information of this sort, but in the vast majority of cases it is either false or incomplete. Things have improved since the early days of Phoenix when operations against specific targets were almost nonexistent. But the improvements have been marginal, and the latest reports from the field suggest the situation is getting worse instead of better. In any case, the type of person "neutralized" by Phoenix is about the same as it always was; they are mostly low-level and of little consequence. The hard-core Party member is still un-caught.

Well Run Police

The South Vietnamese National Police and Military Security Service -- both of which work for Phoenix -- are better now than they were, say, in 1966. But the base was so low that it is difficult to conceive that they could have gotten worse.

The problem here is much more complicated than simply low morale, (which recent reports suggest is endemic among the South Vietnamese constabulary). The most trying aspect of the situation is the Viet Cong's continued penetration of the South Vietnamese security apparatus. Captured documents indicate that many hundreds of South Vietnamese policeman are in reality Viet Cong agents. The penetrations occur at all levels. A government roll-up which took place in northern South Vietnam in 1971 show the dimensions of the problem. Among those reportedly apprehended as Viet Cong agents were the chief of police of Da Nang City. The chief of the police Special Branch, and his assistant for operations, and the chief of police for I Corps. The first three were jailed. The last, after evidence proved

Although the American Advisory effort to Phoenix contained no Viet Cong agents, it often was of questionable help. One of its main shortcomings was the ignorance of most advisors of the Viet Cong target. Prior to August, 1968, the average CIA case officer received no training what so ever in the organization and methods of operations of the Communist structure. Then, in late 1968, a training program started up which by the end of the year gave those bound for Vietnam 24 hours of instruction. This was rapidly cut back. The number of hours in the Viet Cong target now given to CIA case officers going to Saigon is four.

An ancillary problem is the one of population control. Despite many attempts over the last five years, there is still no adequate ID card system in Vietnam, and large numbers of persons, particularly in the slums, roam about without the police knowing who they are. Likewise, the Phoenix system has yet to devise as mundane a thing as a catalogue of fingerprints. If, say, the U.S. ambassador were killed tomorrow, and the gun was found which accomplished the killing, there would be no way to trace the assassin, from the prints on the gun.

The Matter of Prisons

South Vietnamese prisons continue to leak, although not as badly as a few years ago. Still, the average Viet Cong captive -- unlike the common criminal -- will likely go free within a very few months. Again, one can point to improvements, but the basic problem remains that the accounting system which comes into play after a suspect's arrest is so loose that it is often very difficult to tell what happens to him shortly thereafter. In several areas of Vietnam, at present, the system has broken down completely, so that Communist prisoners in these areas frequently fail to go to prison at all.

Furthermore, there is an almost complete lack of a rehabilitation system. The old saw that the most dedicated Vietnamese Communists have usually done time continues to have a ring of truth. Captured documents still show that those who leave South Vietnamese prisons frequently rejoin the Viet Cong organization after their release from jail.

Popular Support

But the biggest single drawback to the Phoenix program is that except in a few areas it lacks popular support. What this boils down to is the reluctance of the average South Vietnamese citizen to turn in a Viet Cong cadre when he encounters one. Whether the reluctance stems from fear or admiration of the Viet Cong, it amounts to the same thing. That is, the extraordinarily large Viet Cong apparatus continues its covert existence in South Vietnamese territory.

Conclusions

In connection with my statement to your committee, I respectfully put forward three conclusions:

- 1) First, the Phoenix program largely failed to come to grips with basic problems, and claimed "improvements" were so marginal as to be of little consequence. Perhaps doomed from the start by built-in flaws, the program's problems were worsened by such shortcomings as woefully insufficient training.
- 2) Second, the game of statistics into which Phoenix plunged allowed the U.S. government to conjure a picture of "progress", which by and large did not exist. In fact the "progress" arose from such factors as the exit from South Vietnam in 1970 of most of the Communist army, and the transfer of large numbers of Viet Cong cadre to so-called government territory, where even today they operate unrecorded by Phoenix statisticians.
- 3) Third, the faulty execution of the program, which was expensive and didn't work, demonstrates once again the need for Congressional scrutiny of the CIA. Until Congress begins to insist on such things, I think, we may expect further questionable programs such as Phoenix.